

April 13 2018

Makin' Ice

LOON HOOTS

The Newsletter of the Plum Lake Association

I'm looking out over the lake.

It is a bleak landscape - very black and white. It is still deep winter here. There are more than 3 feet of snow on the ground and 32" of ice on the snow covered lake. We have had more snow in the last 3 weeks than most of the rest of the winter. Trails for snowmobiles closed before the snow fell. How the heck does that happen?

It is snowing today, as I type. Light fluffy snow. December snow. It was 5 degrees Saturday night. Snow is forecast for this Saturday night. As the old timers in my duck marsh would say...its *makin' ice*. I'm an old timer now, and I say that often on late-season nights at the duck camp, while crinkling shell ice firms up as the wind dies. I have often said we live in a magic place and this change of seasons is the clearest and most exciting example. Late fall to freeze up is dull, cold and grey and blows the final whistle on our wonderful season on the lake. It bums me out.



Ice out is a *MOST EXCITING TIME*, and usually a huge tease. It shows a little more (use your imagination here) every day. I, for one, keep getting a little more excited every day. It's kinda my thing, but you might identify. When water shows up on the ice and the ice is black, the end is near. Rotten ice breaks up and sinks, taking its oxygen to the bottom. The warmer bottom water rises and is greeted by wind, mixing and adding oxygen. Our lake renews itself.

I could use a little renewal myself. For me, its almost time to get moving. Loon platforms need to get anchored in their spots within in a day or two of open water. The males will choose a nest within a week or two of ice out. This year, we have to do water chemistry analysis within 2 weeks of ice out. Then, there is the fun part - perch are ready to eat and the boat needs to be ready for all of it. It's just a whole lot. I thought retirement would be a bit more relaxing but I'm not complaining. I'll be there and I'll be ready.

As Skip always says...**WE ARE SOOO LUCKY!**

AJR

*THE FOLLOWING IS THE SPRING UPDATE FOR THE TOWN BOARD ON THE
ACTIVITY OF THE LAKES COMMITTEE.*

Spring 2018 Report of the Town of Plum Lake Lakes Committee

2017 was a busy year for The Lakes Committee. As has been reported, we are working on the implementation of 4 major projects, all of which received State Grants. We are also tracking two invasive events and monitoring the status of a disturbing trend in fish population on one of our major lakes in the town.

Membership

The Lakes committee has grown with the addition of the leadership of the Ballard, Irving, White Birch Lakes Association (BIWBLA) and a new member from Lake Laura. Active members are as follows.

Mike Stroh, Chairman
Vicki Haberle, Secretary, Star Lake
Jim Haberle, Treasurer, Star Lake
Chuck Atwater, V.P., Ballard Lake
Bob Munson, Lake Laura
Bob Jackson, Lake Laura
Joe Heitz, Ballard Lake
Wayne Bernahl, Ballard Lake
Doug Pinney, Plum Lake
John Richter, Plum Lake

Grants

The Town hired Tim Hoyman of Onterra , LLC to draft a request for a lake planning grant from the DNR and to perform the lake planning project. On July 8, 2017, Tim gave a presentation on the lake planning process (grant request, data gathering and report on study results) at a community-wide meeting. Phase I covers planning for Plum Lake, Star Lake, West Plum and Little Star. Phase II covers planning for Ballard, Irving, White Birch and Laura. Phase III covers planning for Big Muskellunge and Razorback. Credit was given against the Town's share of the cost of this project for the time spent by individuals in attendance at this meeting at a rate of \$12.00 per hour. The Committee wants to thank everyone who attended.

A new grant was received from the state to do a comprehensive survey of the 8 smaller town lakes that have boat landings. They are Dorothy Dunn, Partridge, Dads, Snyder, Frank, Starrett, Lone Tree and Wharton.

We have identified and are working to finalize the hiring of a person to do this work at this time. The County invasive species coordinator will do training of this person. This work will be done during

the 2018 summer season.

The Lakes Committee continued the Clean Boats Clean Water program that has been run in prior years. This program consists of two parts: 1) Town boat landings are monitored for selected hours during the Summer fishing season with interns from UW-Stevens Point; this program is paid for by a grant from the DNR, money from the Town and donations from lake associations, and 2) Town boat landings are monitored in the shoulder season by paid volunteers from donations from lake associations.

The Town applied for and received grants from the DNR to partially fund the installation of "I-LIDS" cameras at four town boat landings: Plum Lake-State House Point, Plum Lake-Town Landing, Ballard Lake and Lake Laura. These cameras will be installed in June and will provide 24-hour monitoring of boat launching at these landings. These cameras in other locations have been shown to significantly reduce the launching of contaminated fishing boats. We hope that the cameras together with increased signage will be equally effective for us.

Lake Issues

The Town closed the trailer-launched motorized boat landing on West Plum Lake, which is a wild rice/no motor lake designated by WDNR. The landing remains open to hand-carried boats (canoes, kayaks, etc.).

As you know, Eurasian Milfoil was discovered on Little Star Lake during the first phase of the Lake Management Plan. Divers subsequently removed it. A follow up sweep will be conducted this summer and a follow-up removal may be necessary.

In spring of last year, a new member of our committee, Bob Jackson, who is a retired fisheries biologist, reported that there had been a massive die-off of green frog tadpoles in Lake Laura. Samples were sent to the State Lab for analysis. The Lab reported that the cause was a protozoa. This infestation has happened in perhaps a dozen lakes in the country, the closest being a lake in northern Minnesota. Nothing is known at this time about the source of this infestation, the host of the protozoa or where in the environment it exists before it infests the tadpoles. Bob also reported that this was the third consecutive year of walleye reproduction failure, which had not previously happened on Laura before 2015. We are grateful that Bob has joined our committee and has made his expertise available to us as we deal with these types of issues.

The Lakes Committee wants to thank the Town Supervisors and Sharon Brooker, Clerk/Treasurer, for all their work on behalf of the Town's lakes.

For the Lakes Committee

John Richter

SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL MEETING, JULY 7TH

9AM

TOWN HALL

—————
**NEW EVENT COMING!
STAY TUNED**

SHORT CASTS

ATV's have been in the news as the state plans routes through the Northern Highland Forest. The DNR and the Town are being lobbied heavily by the ATV clubs, who seem intent on using roads and trails within the Town of Plum Lake. The town board had a listening session last month and at this date has not indicated any change in that status of ATV's. I have been told that there will not be any changes or decisions prior to this summer. If you wish to express your opinion to the town supervisors, you may do so by email to: townofplumlake.org. Stay tuned.

We will have an **invasive sweep for curly leaf pondweed in late June**. Those of you who signed up to volunteer to cover a section on Plum (thank you!) will hear more about this effort and arrangements from Cheryl Carper who is chairing this. This is an important event for us - curly leaf is a terrible invasive and needs to be found early to avoid huge removal expense and annual problems. It is well established in Lost Lake and other lakes in our area.

Our **Annual meeting** is especially important this year as we enter the second year of our lake management plan work. The second phase of the town plan is beginning and the second year of our Plum Lake plan is underway. The date for this meeting is July 7th and will take place once again at the town hall. More to come on this meeting.

A major study on **Wisconsin Walleye** was published in the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Species. I learned about it through a Twin Cities news paper. It was conducted by an aquatic ecologist for WDNR who is now a professor at Cal-Davis. It mentions research done by Gretchen Hanson, who did the research on our rusty crayfish in Vilas County when she was with WDNR. She is now with Minnesota DNR. You see the pattern here.....

Anyway, the article on the study report is interesting. You can find it at:

<http://www.startribune.com/wisconsin-walleye-have-hit-a-wall-study-finds/478706063/>

PLUM LAKE ASSOCIATION

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